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THE MONTANA ROUNDUP
OF INDUSTRIAL HEALTH BRIEFS

Montana State Board of Health
B. K. Kilbourne, M.D., Executive Officer

Division of Industrial Hygiene
Paul M. Giever, Director

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INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE NEWS

Mr. Dohrman H. Byers who served as Director of the Industrial Hygiene Division from January 1944 to August 31, 1946, returned to Washington, D. C. to resume his duties with the U. S. Public Health Service. Mr. Paul M. Giever assumed the duties of Director on September 1, 1946, and expects to carry on the policies of the department much as they have been in the past.

It is the earnest desire of the new Director to weld ever closer the spirit of cooperation that now exists between the Industrial Hygiene Service and those organizations or individuals to whom this service is offered.

The Industrial Hygiene Division was created to assist organizations and/or individuals who may encounter working conditions suspected to be detrimental to health. This department is equipped to make evaluations and assist in making recommendations which will alleviate unhealthful conditions encountered in occupation or every day life, and, every effort will be made to render prompt and accurate assistance in problems of this nature.

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IS YOUR GARAGE SAFE FROM CARBON MONOXIDE?

The occurrence of numerous accidents, some of them fatal, whereby people have been overcome through breathing air fouled by automobile engines, discloses serious hazards that are not given proper consideration and a hazard that becomes particularly pertinent with the advent of winter. Automotive engineers will agree that it is advantageous to allow an engine to become "warmed up" before driving in cold weather. This practice, however, can be approved from an industrial health standpoint only if the "warm up" is conducted out of doors or, if the garage is provided with adequate local exhaust ventilation. Your home garage is not provided with local ventilation so the "warm up" can only safely be conducted by leaving the garage doors open.

Cont'd on page 2

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This gas is not readily detectable by sense of smell or taste because when pure, it is a colorless, odorless and tasteless gas. It is extremely poisonous because it combines with the red coloring matter of the blood more readily than oxygen does, and blood that is saturated with carbon monoxide can not take up oxygen. Exposure to an atmosphere containing only 0.20 percent will cause a man at rest to collapse within an hour, and, exposure to as little as 0.05 percent causes headache within a few hours. Different people are affected differently, and a man at work will be overcome much more rapidly than a man at rest.

The dangerous symptoms come without warning, and collapse could prove fatal unless outside aid arrived very soon, because the running engine would continue to generate carbon monoxide and continue to make the air more poisonous. When a person is found overcome in a garage, throw the doors wide open and remove the person to fresh air AT ONCE, call a doctor, and give artificial respiration, continuing without interruption until the doctor arrives or until natural breathing is restored.

Through previous studies conducted by our Industrial Hygiene Division in various garages throughout the state, it has been concluded that enough carbon monoxide gas may be expelled from the exhaust of automobile engines to render the air poisonous. Therefore, with the approaching cold weather, it is urged that all garages bear in mind the dangers of carbon monoxide. Its presence can only be detected by instruments and our Industrial Hygiene Division is at your service to trace down what has been sometimes called the "Tip-Toe Killer"!

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SILICOSIS IS PREVENTABLE!

Montana taxpayers will pay more than 1/4 million dollars for silicosis assistance in the next two years. The number of individuals applying for this assistance is increasing yearly. That these cases of industrial injuries should be properly cared for is right and just, but that new silicosis health injuries are occurring yearly is criminal negligence.

Check your mine or plant -- if dusty operations are conducted, they should be evaluated. The Industrial Hygiene Division is equipped and anxious to make tests for you which will determine the silica content of the dust and also the amount of silica generated by an operation. These tests can be made under actual working conditions so as to provide you with an accurate technical evaluation of the health hazard involved.

Let's all work together in the interest of further reducing this unnecessary waste of productivity, this undesirable affliction of the working man and this stigma of mediaeval negligence which marks many of our industries.

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ATTENTION PHYSICIANS!
ASSIST THE INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE PROGRAM AND THE
WORKER BY REPORTING OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES.

STREAM POLLUTION AND SEWAGE TREATMENT
IN THE MISSOURI RIVER BASIN ---MONTANA

Montana is a relatively sparsely inhabited state with the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers and their tributaries as the main drainage channels. Stream pollution is not as acute as in more densely settled areas. However, some situations have developed to the point where the sanitary sewage from large concentrated populations, together with wastes from oil refineries, meat slaughtering plants, and beet sugar factories, has produced some overburdens of pollutions.

The rivers, in no cases, are so foully corrupted but that they will recover upon elimination and treatment of the pollutional factors and vigorous steps have been taken to that end. Already some industrial waste pollution has been reduced.

The establishment of industry is to be encouraged, for there is ample room, power and raw materials. It only remains for industrial management to recognize the rights of other users of the waters, and the limits to the privileges of industry to the use of the stremas for waste disposal, in order to assure a proper balance between stream flow, oxygen resources of the waters, and volume and character of wastes. When all this is fully appreciated, industry may flourish.

The treatment of domestic sewage in Montana has been along the lines of more simple methods. As our urban populations increase and the need of sewage treatment spreads, more interest is being manifest in mechanical types of treatment facilities to the end that controllable processes will be available, and more satisfactory results will be obtained.

Previous to 1945, the state laws have recognized the rights only by owners of public water supplies to a reasonably clean river water. The State Legislature, in 1945, amended the laws, recognizing the rights of individuals as well. This is a forward step, and we believe one taken in time to promote cleaner streams in Montana. We have not attained the desired condition in all cases as yet, but the attitude of municipal and industrial management is generally a satisfactory attitude which holds forth hope for an ultimate attainment.

There is need for a loosening of purse strings by budget makers, and we believe that the spread of information concerning injurious wastes and methods of control and treatment will result in this more generous attitude.

Our State law-makers also have passed enabling legislation whereby municipalities may issue revenue bonds for the financing of sewage treatment plants. While, as yet, no city in Montana levies sewer charges, at least five have negotiated for the sale of such revenue bonds and contemplate the use of sewer service charges for financing them, when treatment plants are built.--H. B. Foote, Director, Division of Sanitary Engineering, Montana State Board of Health.

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